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ON THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF RUSSIAN AMERICA.

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Read before the Society 19th February 1845.

The paper submitted to the Society is upon the Ethnography of Russian America. For a variety of reasons, the tribes in these parts are of paramount importance. Inhabiting the most north-western extremity of America on the coast of Behring's Straits, they are divided from Asia only by that channel, so that of all the nations of the New World they are most in contact with those of the Old. This circumstance alone puts them prominently forward in ethnology; since the *primâ facie* theory, as to the population of America, must certainly be in favour of the passage having taken place through Behring's Straits.

The limits of the Russian possessions in America, or of the geographical area which we are considering, are not very definitely determined: at least, the line of demarcation is, in a great degree, a political rather than a natural one. From Mount St Elias to the southernmost extremity of Prince of Wales Island, the territory in question consists of a strip of sea-coast, and islands, with the British possessions of New Norfolk and New Hanover at the back; whilst from Mount St Elias northward, as far as the Arctic Sea, the line of division is imaginary, coinciding with the 141° W. long. It can scarcely be expected, that a frontier so determined can coincide with any important divisions, either in physical or ethnographical geography. Still the area in question is a convenient one.

Considering the remote situation of these extensive and inhospitable tracts, the knowledge we possess of them is creditable to the government of Russia. From the time of Behring downward, the coasts have been accurately described; whilst the communications of the officials of the Russian American Company exhibit far more than an average amount of intelligence. For such portions of the present paper as are not

purely philological, the author has drawn upon Baer's *Statistische und Ethnographische Nachrichten*, &c. Of a Russian settlement in New California, although American, no notice is taken. On the other hand, a nation inhabiting the extreme promontory of Asia (the Tchuktchi) are, for reasons that will make themselves apparent, dealt with as American. On the southern extremity of Russian America, the native tribes are known to their neighbours of New Caledonia, the Oregon country, and to the Hudson's Bay Company, under the names of Colooches, Tunghaases, Atnas, Coltshanies, Ugalentses, Konagis, Cadiacks, Tehugatches, and Kenays. For the north, and the shores of the Arctic Sea, they are dealt with (and that truly) as members of the great Esquimaux family. Further investigation multiplies the names of these tribes, so that we hear of Inkalites, Inkulukhlaites, Kiyataimutis, Agolegmutes, Pashtolegmutes, Magmutis, &c. &c. To these divisions may be added the different varieties of the natives of the Aleutian islands. In the classification of these numerous tribes, it is considered that much remains to be done.

For the tribes on the shore of the Northern Ocean, and for the parts immediately south of Behring's Straits, the general character, both physical and moral, seems to be Esquimaux. The enormous line of coast over which this nation is extended has long been known. The language and manners of Greenland have been known to us since the times of the earliest Danish missionaries; so that details, both physical and moral, of no savages are better understood than those of the Greenlanders. With this knowledge, it is easy to trace the extension of the race. The shores of Hudson's Bay are inhabited by the same stock. So also is the coast of Labrador. The three forms of speech are but dialects of one language: a fact that has long been known. Hence the Esquimaux and Greenlanders have long been recognised as identical. From Hudson's Bay, northward and westward, the whole line of sea-coast, as far as Mackenzie's River, is Esquimaux; and that with but little variety of type, either in physical conformation, manners, or language. The interpreter to Captain Franklin was an Esquimaux from Hudson's Bay, yet he had no difficulty in understanding the dialects west of Mackenzie's River, 137° W.

Long. (See *Archæologia Americana*, ii. 11.) Three degrees westward, however, a change in the Esquimaux characteristics takes place; although the inhabitants of the quarters in question by no means cease to be Esquimaux. The tribes already noticed may be called the Eastern, those about to be mentioned the Western Esquimaux. The dividing line is fixed by Captain Franklin at 140° W. long. The tribes on each side of this line have *at first a great difficulty in understanding each other*. Now the line between the subdivisions of the Esquimaux language coincides very nearly with the boundary line of Russian America. Hence the ethnography of that territory begins with the Western Esquimaux.

It is no refinement to state, that, with the Western Esquimaux, we find a change in the social and moral type, exhibiting itself in a greater appreciation of the articles of civilized life, both as means of home use, and as instruments of commercial barter. They resort annually to the eastern boundary, and exchange articles of Russian manufacture for seals-skins, oil, and furs. This intercourse is of late date.—*Archæologia Americana*, ii., 11.

To Kotzebue's Sound and Behring's Straits the same race, with similar characters, is continued. Of Behring's Straits it occupies *both* sides, the Asiatic as well as the American. From Behring's Straits to the Peninsula of Aliaska, and from thence to Cook's Inlet (or Kenay Bay), every thing is unequivocally Esquimaux, and has long been recognized as such.

That a statement lately made was no refinement, may be proved from the third chapter of Baer's work, where he determines the character of the Esquimaux trade, and gives it as a measure of the intercourse between Asia and America. It seems referable to two centres, viz., the parts about Behring's Straits, and the parts about Cook's Inlet. For the first, the market extends from Icy Cape to the Promontory of Aliaska, and has for its stations the islands of Behring's Straits. The second district comprises the Aleutian islands, Cadiack, and the line of the sea-coast as far south as Queen Charlotte's Island. Now, whatever may be the amount of Russian civilization, in determining some of the characteristics of the Western Esqui-

maux, it is certain that the tribes of that race now inhabiting Asia, were occupants of their present localities, anterior to the Russian Conquest of Kamskatka.

A second deviation from the Esquimaux type, we find in the island Cadiack, and the coast of the continent opposite. The early Russian discoverers speak of a continual warfare between opposing tribes of the same stock ; whilst another tribe, the Inkalite, is said to uphold itself bravely against the more numerous nation of the Kuskokwims. As a general rule, warfare, except as a defence against tribes of a different race, is as foreign to the typical Esquimaux of Greenland as to the Laplander of Europe.

Measured by another test, and that of the psychological sort (*viz.*, the capacity for religious instruction), the Western Esquimaux coincides with the Esquimaux of Greenland. With the exception, perhaps, of the Negro, the race, in general, is the most docile in respect to the influences of Christianity. The religious history of extreme points of the Aleutian Islands and Greenland verifies this statement.

The extent to which a mixed breed has been propagated under the government of Russia, may be collected from the following tables. In New Archangel the population is as follows:—

Europeans,	406
Creoles or half-breeds, .	307
Aleutians,	134

In the remaining part of the territory it is as follows:—

Europeans,	246
Half-breeds,	684
Natives,	8882

Of places of trust in New Archangel, a very large proportion is held by Half-breeds. We find them as overseers, police-officers, clerks, watchmakers, medical students.

Such seem the most remarkable points connected with the Russian Esquimaux in general. They are few in number, because it is the plan of the writer not so much to exhibit the whole details of the race to which they belong, as to put forward prominently such characteristics as are differential to them and the Esquimaux of Greenland and Labrador.

It is now proper to give a brief notice of the more important tribes, these being mentioned separately.

1. *The Tchuktchi*.—This is the name of the Esquimaux of Asia. It is generally accompanied by the epithet *sedentary*, so that we speak of these people as the *sedentary* or *settled* Tchuktchi. This distinguishes them from the so-called *Reindeer Tchuktchi*, a tribe of the Koriack family. For either one or the other of these tribes the name of Tchuktchi should be abolished. It is my impression that the difference between the Esquimaux of Asia and America do not represent more than a few centuries of separation.

2. *The Kuskokwimers*.—This tribe, which occupies the banks of the river from which it takes its name, may stand as the representative for the tribes between Cape Rodney and the Peninsula of Aliaska. Its numbers are estimated at upwards of 7000. Transitional in character to the tribes of the coast and interior, its manners coincide with its geographical position. In the use of certain so-called ornaments, it agrees with the other Esquimaux tribes; as it agrees with the Esquimaux and Finn tribes in the use of the sweating-bath. The Kuskoquimers count distance by the number of *nights* requisite for the journey. Of the constellations they have a detailed knowledge, founded upon observation. The most prominent of their institutions is the *Kahim*; a building found in every village, erected like an amphitheatre, capable of containing all the males of the place, and which, over and above many peculiar domestic purposes connected with its erection, serves as a council-hall for the males of the population.

3. *The Tchugatches*.—Natives of Prince William's Sound, and closely allied to the islanders of Cadiack, with whom they agree in language. Their historical traditions are, that they came from the coast, and from the north; their mythological ones, that they are descended from the Dog.

These three divisions are not only indubitably Esquimaux, but have also been recognised as such.

Those that follow are generally referred to another ethnological group. In the parts about Cook's Inlet (Bay of Kenay) and Mount St Elias, a second race is said to make its appear-

ance, and this is generally separated from the Esquimaux by a broad line of demarcation. It is called the Kolooch race or family, and is generally placed in contrast with the Esquimaux. Isolated tribes akin to the Kolooches, and worthy of special notice, are the following:—

1. *The Ugalyackmutsi* or Ugalentses, consisting of about 38 families.—They change their localities with the season, and are Kolooch in manners and conformation. Living around Mount St Elias they are frontier tribes to the Tchugatches.

2. *The Kenays*, inhabiting the coast of Cook's Inlet, 460 families strong.—Historically, they assert that their origin is from the hills of the interior, from whence they descended coastward. Their mythological and ultimate origin is from the *raven*, connected with which they have a complex cosmogony. Descent from the *raven*, or descent from the *dog*, is considered, for these tribes we are speaking of, as an instrument in ethnological criticism. Like the Ugalentses, they are in contact with Tchugatch Esquimaux.

3. *The Atnahs*, dwelling on the Copper River, 60 families strong, hunters of rein-deer, and workers in iron as well as copper.—They coincide with the typical Kolooches in burning their dead, in ascribing the origin of their race to the *raven*, and in most other particulars.

These three tribes are unequivocally connected closely with each other, and with the other members of the Kolooch group. The position of the following is less definite:—

1. *The Kolshani*.—These represent the natives of the interior. They fall into two divisions, whereof the nearer can make itself intelligible to the Atnas and Kenays. The more distant one is savage, inhospitable, unintelligible. Cannibalism is one of their real or accredited characteristics.

2. *The Inchulukhlaites*, dwelling on the Chulitna River.—They are stated to be akin to the Magimuts, who are allied with,

3. *The Inkalites*.—In one village alone they are 700 strong. Their language is said to be a mixture of the Kenay, Unalashkan, and Atna.

It is hoped that the true character of the ethnological diffi-

culty involved in the classifications of the tribes enumerated, along with several others in the same territory, has suggested itself to the mind of the reader : viz. the position of the undetermined tribes, and the relations of the Esquimaux and the Kolooch groups to each other. These problems seem capable of being solved by means of the evidence of languages. Previous, however, to the enumeration of our data upon this point, it must be observed, that members of a *third* ethnographical division, in all probability, form part of the native population of Russian America. From the Lake Athabasca, as a centre, to the Atlantic on one hand, and to the Pacific on the other, languages of this group are spoken ; so that the Athabaskan area in its extension from east to west, is second only to the Esquimaux. Now both the Kolooch and Esquimaux languages have fundamental affinities with the Athabaskan, and *vice versa* ; whilst it is generally the case in Ethnology, that two languages radically connected with a third, are also radically connected with each other. With this premise, we may enumerate in detail, our data in the way of philology. This method will introduce new names and new localities, since we have often vocabularies where we have nothing else besides.

1. *Beechey's Esquimaux*.—The most northern specimen of the western Esquimaux. Spoken in Kotzebue's Sound.

2. The Aglimut vocabulary of the Atlas Ethnographique.

3. The Esquimaux of the Island of St Lawrence.—*Ibid*.

4. The Asiatic Esquimaux of the Tchuktchi of Tchuktchi-Noss. Klaproth's Asia Polyglotta.

5. The Asiatic Esquimaux of the Tchuktchi of the mouth of the river Anadyr.—*Ibid*.

6. The Esquimaux of Norton Sound.—Cook's Voyages.

7. The Kuskokwimer vocabulary of Baer's Beiträge.

8. A vocabulary for the Island of Nuniwock in the Atlas Ethnographique, is unequivocally Esquimaux. So also are the dialects of the Peninsula of Aliaska. Having seen, however, no vocabulary, I am unable to state whether they most resemble those of the Aleutian Islands, (a prolongation of its western extremity), or of those of the Island Cadiack on its south-eastern side. At any rate, the languages akin to the

Cadiack, and the languages of the Aleutian group, form separate divisions of sub-dialects. Beginning with the Aleutian class, we have the following materials:—

9. Unalashkan vocabularies by Lisiansky, Wrangell, Resanoff, and others.

10. The Andreanowsky Isles.—Robeck's vocabulary.—See Mithridates.

There is external evidence that the language for the whole Aleutian group is radically one, the differences, however, being, as dialectal differences, remarkable. The natives of Atchu and Unalashka have difficulty in understanding each other.—Mithridates.

11. Cadiack vocabularies by Resanoff, Lisiansky, and Wrangell.

12. Tchugatchi vocabularies by Resanoff and Wrangell.

13. The Lord's Prayer in Jakutat, by Baranoff.—Mithridates.

Notwithstanding the statement that only 19 words out of 1100 are common to the Unalashkan and Cadiack, the affinity of these languages to each other, and their undoubted place in the Esquimaux class, has long been recognised.

14. *The Inkuluklaities*.—This tribe is akin to the Magimut and the Inkalaite. We possess a few words of the language, which are sufficient to prove that although its definite place is undetermined, it has miscellaneous affinities to the Atna, Kenay, and Esquimaux.

15. The Ugalyachmutsi of the Mithridates.

16. The Ugalents of Wrangell.—See Baer's *Beiträge*. These two vocabularies represent the same language. The Ugalyachmutsi, although left by Resanoff as an isolated language, is unequivocally stated by Baer to be Kolooch. Its contrast with the Esquimaux of the Tchugatches, has always been insisted on.

17. Kenay vocabularies by Davidoff, Resanoff, Lisiansky, and Wrangell; also an anonymous one from a native. Gallatin, in the *Archæologia Americana*, goes so far as to separate the Kenay even from the Kolooch language.

18. The Atna of Wrangell.—See Baer's *Beiträge*. Now, another American language, spoken some hundred miles south of the Copper River, of which we find a vocabulary in Sir

Alexander Mackenzie's Travels, is called *Atna*. It has no direct affinity with the present tongue. A hypothetical solution of this coincidence lies in the fact, that in the Athabascan languages the root *d-n*, or *t-n* = *man*. That the Kenayes call themselves *Tnai*, or *Tnaina* = *men*, is specially stated by Baer, p. 103.

19. The Koltshany vocabulary of Wrangell.—See Baer's Beiträge. The tables of the work in question shew the language to be undoubted Kolooch.

20. The Sitca vocabularies—numerous. Cook's Norfolk Sound; the Sitca of Lisiansky; the Sitca of Davidoff (see Archæologia Americana); the Sitca of Wrangell. According to Captain Bryant, it is spoken from N. lat. 59° to 5° S. by twenty tribes. The number of individuals who speak it reckoned by Mr Green, an American missionary, at 6500—see Archæologia Americana. The standard Kolooch is that of Sitca or Norfolk Sound.

21. The Tunghaase of Mr Tolmie. Of this, the most southern dialect of Russian America, we find a short vocabulary in the Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society. It is truly stated to be closely allied to the Sitca.

That there are no more than two groups required for the classification of the above-mentioned languages, and that these are the Esquimaux and the Kolooch, seems evident. That these groups are of no high value may be shewn. It is undoubtedly true, that if we only compare isolated vocabularies with each other we shall find little but points of contrast. And we find less than might be expected even when we compare groups of vocabularies.

1. The tables of Baer, exhibiting three languages for the Esquimaux and five for the Kolooch group, give scarcely half a dozen words common to the two.

2. The table of Lisiansky, with the Unalashkan and Cadiack on the one side, and the Kenay and Sitca on the other, presents but little more.

3. The earliest languages with which the Ugalyatmutsi was compared were Esquimaux, and the contrast was insisted upon from the first.

It is only when we apply what may be called the *indirect*

method that the true value of the Esquimaux group becomes recognised.

1. Each has affinities with the Athabascan tongues, and perhaps equal affinities.

2. Each has affinities with the Oregon languages, and each perhaps equally.

3. Each has definite affinities with the languages of New California, and each perhaps equal ones.

4. Each has miscellaneous affinities with all the other tongues both of North and South America.

These facts that connect the Esquimaux languages with those spoken to the south of them involve, as may be easily seen, a theory of much higher importance than the position of groups like the Kolooch. They are taken along with the geographical position of the Esquimaux race in respect to Asia, and point to the parts in question as the starting-points for the population of the New World. Upon this latter I can only say at present, that I find Esquimaux words in the following languages :—

1. The Koriack.

2. The Kamskadale.

3. The Aino of the Curulian Isles. In respect to this last group, it is remarkable that whilst I only find two words (the names for *house* and *eye*) common to the *Western* Esquimaux vocabularies of Lisiansky and the Aino ones of Langgendorf, I find between the latter and the *Eastern* Esquimaux of Parry a considerable number.

4. The Corean.

5. The Japanese.

This is in the way of direct evidence. The Oregon and Kolooch languages have similar and equal affinities ; whilst the Asiatic languages enumerated have themselves affinities in the Old World known and recognised.

From what has been laid before the Society, it may be seen of how great importance it is to determine, whether the languages of Russian America pass into each other gradually, or are divided by trenchant lines of demarcation.